

ΣΥΣΤΑΣΙΣ ΠΡΑΓΜΑΤΩΝ:

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S USE OF THE ACTION IN  
ATHENIAN TRAGEDY

Submitted by Rowan Ellis Siobhan Fraser,  
to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Classics, July 2010

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

.....

# ABSTRACT

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the stagecraft and composition of Athenian tragedy through a re-evaluation of its component elements within the structure. I undertake a re-interpretation of the Aristotelian terms for ‘plot’, which allows for a more nuanced examination of events occurring within a tragedy. As Aristotle notes, the *systasis* of *pragmata* is the structure of events that forms a tragedy. The *muthos* is the way in which these events are presented and includes the actions and words of the *dramatis personae*. *Pragmata* are constituent elements of both the *systasis* and *muthos*. This thesis identifies and evaluates the *pragma*’s effects upon the movement of the *systasis*, its contribution to the enrichment of the *muthos* and its influence on audience engagement with a performance through both enacted and non-enacted forms.

My approach involves a rigorous examination of the elements common to an enacted *pragma*, before identifying the variations therein. While a *pragma* involves all actions which serve the same general function, every instance of a *pragma* is unique. Each chapter in turn focuses on a particular *pragma*, before examining the role of that *pragma* within an entire tragedy. Enactments of each *pragma* in extant tragedy are tabled in appendices. The *pragma* of return home is examined within *Andromache*; recognition in Sophocles’ *Elektra*; supplication in *Hekabe*; and reporting in *Women of Trachis*.

This analysis demonstrates the dynamic role and versatility of different types of *pragma* within a tragedy, and the playwright’s ingenuity as demonstrated by his deployment of this element. No single approach or methodology can by itself fully interpret an Athenian tragedy, but a focus on a particular *pragma* illuminates different themes and emphases and ultimately provides us with a better understanding of a tragedy.

# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	5
ABBREVIATIONS .....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	7
1.    TERMINOLOGY .....	9
2. <i>SYSTASIS</i> .....	13
3. <i>MUTHOS</i> .....	14
4. <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....	17
5.    ROLE OF <i>PRAGMATA</i> IN A TRAGEDY .....	23
5.1.  ENACTED <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....	24
5.2.  NON-ENACTED <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....	27
6.    AIMS OF THE RESEARCH .....	29
CHAPTER ONE: RETURN HOME .....	35
1.    THE MANIFESTATIONS OF RETURN IN TRAGEDY .....	38
1.1.  THE ENACTED RETURN .....	39
1.1.1.  ELEMENTS OF THE ENACTED RETURN .....	42
1.1.2.  ROLE OF THE ENACTED RETURN IN TRAGEDY .....	50
1.2.  THE NON-ENACTED <i>PRAGMA</i> OF RETURN .....	57
2. <i>ANDROMACHE</i> : THE ΑΝΟΣΤΟΣ ΝΟΣΤΟΣ PLAY .....	63
3.    CONCLUSION .....	77
CHAPTER TWO: RECOGNITION .....	78
1.    THE MANIFESTATIONS OF RECOGNITION IN TRAGEDY .....	79
1.1.  THE ENACTED RECOGNITION .....	81
1.1.1.  ELEMENTS OF THE ENACTED RECOGNITION .....	82
1.1.2.  LANGUAGE .....	96
1.1.3.  RECOGNITION OF A CORPSE .....	100
1.1.4.  ROLE OF THE ENACTED RECOGNITION IN TRAGEDY ..	101

1.2.	THE NON-ENACTED <i>PRAGMA</i> OF RECOGNITION.....	104
2.	SOPHOCLES' <i>ELEKTRA</i> : WAITING FOR RECOGNITION .....	120
3.	CONCLUSION.....	137
CHAPTER THREE: SUPPLICATION .....		138
1.	THE MANIFESTATIONS OF SUPPLICATION IN TRAGEDY.....	139
1.1.	THE ENACTED SUPPLICATION .....	140
1.1.1.	PROCESS .....	143
1.1.2.	LANGUAGE .....	151
1.1.3.	PARTICIPANTS .....	155
1.1.4.	REASONS FOR SUPPLICATION .....	159
1.1.5.	ROLE OF THE ENACTED SUPPLICATION IN TRAGEDY ..	164
1.2.	THE NON-ENACTED <i>PRAGMA</i> OF SUPPLICATION .....	168
2.	<i>HEKABE</i> : SUPPLICATION AS A RESPONSE TO <i>TUCHĒ</i> .....	172
3.	CONCLUSION.....	191
CHAPTER FOUR: REPORTING.....		193
1.	THE MANIFESTATIONS OF REPORTING IN TRAGEDY .....	195
1.1.	THE ENACTED REPORT .....	195
1.1.1.	STRUCTURE .....	196
1.1.2.	PARTICIPANTS .....	202
1.1.3.	LANGUAGE .....	222
1.1.4.	ROLE OF THE ENACTED REPORT IN TRAGEDY .....	229
1.2.	THE NON-ENACTED <i>PRAGMA</i> OF REPORTING .....	233
2.	<i>WOMEN OF TRACHIS</i> : ὄψ' ἐκδιδάσκειν.....	235
3.	CONCLUSION.....	249
CONCLUSIONS .....		249
APPENDIX 1: ENACTED RETURN <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		253
APPENDIX 2: NON-ENACTED RETURN <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		255
APPENDIX 3: ENACTED RECOGNITION <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		259
APPENDIX 4: ENACTED SUPPLICATION <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		261
APPENDIX 5: NON-ENACTED SUPPLICATION <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		264
APPENDIX 6: ENACTED REPORTING <i>PRAGMATA</i> .....		267
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....		271

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Matthew Wright for his insightful suggestions of possible avenues of thought, his critical comments and his reading and rereading of drafts. It has been a delight to explore the nuances of Athenian tragedy and to learn so much about irony and old comedy with him.

The Exeter Classics and Ancient History Department has been a stimulating community within which to research and work and I have sincerely enjoyed being part of it. Thanks especially to Lynette Mitchell, Richard Seaford and Claire Turner for the sanity checks.

A huge thank you to the amazing community of postgrads for the reading groups, the seminars, the ‘networking’ at the pub and, above all, the laughter and good times! My thanks especially to Pauline, Kyle, Steve, Kiu, Sam, Valeria, Liz and James. I couldn’t ask for better colleagues. But my biggest debt of gratitude is to Sharon for the constant encouragement, love and support. I would not have achieved this without you.

I am exceedingly grateful to all my friends in Exeter and around the world for their constant support and words of encouragement. And a huge thank you to those who went above and beyond in also commenting on and proofreading drafts, notably Pauline Hanesworth, Mike Marshall, Sophie Mynott, Anne-Sophie Noel, Bronwyn Notzon, Michelle Russell and Michelle Smith. I would also especially like to thank Michael Scott, Liz Pritchard, Steve Roderick and Evan True for the regular morale boosts.

The European Network of Research and Documentation of Performances of Ancient Greek Drama summer course at Epidavros helped to inspire this research, as well as to create deep friendships beginning from intense discussions about, and a love of, these amazing plays.

Finally, this thesis would not have been possible without the support of my family back in Australia and in Britain. Thank you for the chance to follow through with this crazy love of ancient Greek. This thesis is for my parents, Ian and Dorothy Fraser, who knew I could do it and helped me do so.

# ABBREVIATIONS

A.	Aeschylus
E.	Euripides
<i>EGF</i>	M. Davies, <i>Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (1988) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>FGrH</i>	F. Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (1923-62) Berlin & Leiden: Brill.
<i>LfgrE</i>	<i>Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (1955) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
<i>PMGF</i>	M. Davies, <i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (1991) Oxford: Clarendon Press.
S.	Sophocles
<i>TrGF</i>	B. Snell, R. Kannicht and S. Radt, <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (5 vols, 1971-2004) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.